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ABSTRACT

Real democracy is a style of living and thinking, in which every step refers to the principle of equality among people. This guide seeks to show models that can help people, especially young people, learn to live democratically. The guide notes that young people cannot learn democracy without continually, from the earliest years, living in democratic surroundings, practicing their own influence, participating when decisions are made, and sharing responsibility for their outcomes. It stresses staff training, communication among adults and youth, and definition of roles. The guide presents the following discussion and decision models: "Active Meeting"; "Future Workshop"; "Cafe Discussion"; "Fish Ball"; "Lemniscat"; and "Combined System." (BT)

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# Democracy Every Day: Discussion and Decision Models for Young People and Adults.

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Martineniene, Rima

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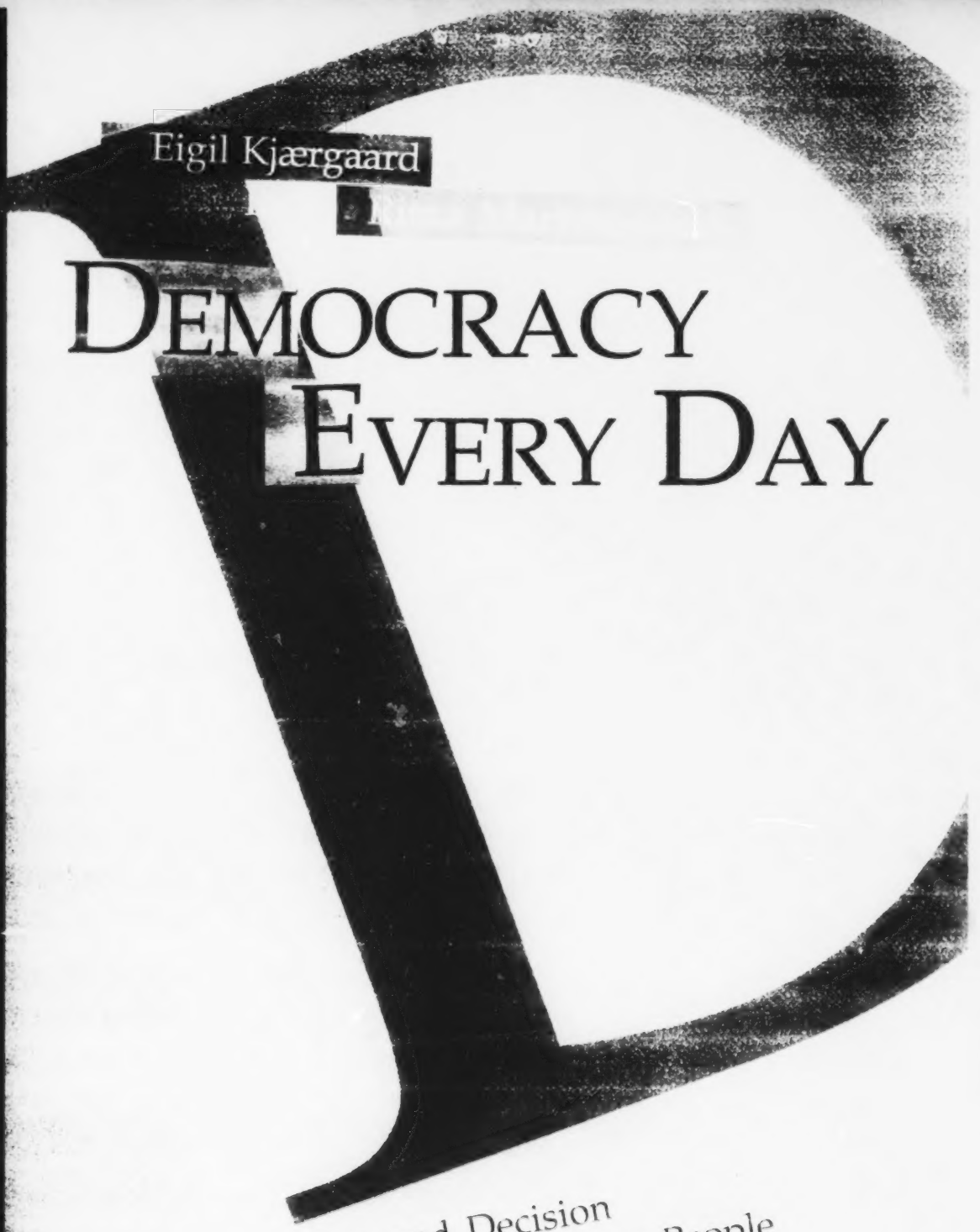
Eigil Kjærgaard

# DEMOCRACY EVERY DAY



Discussion and Decision Models for Young People and Adults

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Nørre Djurs Kommune, Denmark

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# DEMOCRACY EVERY DAY

*Discussion and Decision Models for Young People and Adults*

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# INTRODUCTION

## Democracy as a style of living and thinking

When we have to decide whether a state is democratic or not, first of all we look at the "top level": whether a constitution guarantees political and civic rights, whether different political parties are allowed, whether free and democratic elections are held, whether freedom of speech and meetings is not violated, and so on.

But the country cannot be considered democratic if people in everyday life think and act differently: if all decisions in schools and institutions are taken by one leader, or depend on his/her mood, if students or staff are afraid to say what they mean, if in families everything always depends on parents' decisions. Leaders justify their absolute rule by referring to the responsibility for the functioning of an organisation. However, leadership can be democratic as well as autocratic.

On the other hand, democracy is sometimes misunderstood as total freedom. The main principle of democracy says: the more the rights, the more the responsibilities. When people say, "Our institution is not democratic," they often mean, "We are not allowed to do what we wish to do". However, this is not democracy. If a leader allows employees total freedom and never calls for responsibility, this is called anarchy, which leads to deterioration and chaos.

People tend to choose either autocracy or anarchy when they have not been introduced to models of democratic rule in everyday situations. This book is an attempt to show models that could help people (especially young people) learn to live democratically.

Democracy is not just a political game in the quest for power. Real democracy is a style of living and thinking, in which in every step one can refer to the principle of equality among people.

## Democracy and the influence of youth in society

Young people cannot learn democracy other than by continually (from the earliest years) living in democratic surroundings, practising their own influence, participating when decisions are taken,

and sharing responsibility for their outcomes. A democratic youth is as important for future society as an intelligent youth; therefore, no organisation dealing with young people can shake off this task, irrespective of how noble its direct goals are.

If you want to open your organisation up to the influence of youth, first of all you have to take care of the following things.

One: Teach your staff (youth leaders, teachers, trainers etc.), what methods will open a situation up to the influence of young people and what role adults will play. Youth leaders and teachers/trainers are the main power that can facilitate the influence of youth, therefore it is very important that they are sincere, not afraid of criticism from young people, can learn constructively from them and do not take a defensive position against them. Adults working with youth should be open-minded and flexible enough to change their mind during discussions.

Two: Leaders and staff of the institution or organisation have to discuss their attitude to youth influence and state it in written form: in what spheres youth can take decisions, how their decisions and suggestions will be considered, and how youth itself will be responsible for its own decisions.

What are the particular skills that young people have to learn in order to be active members of a democratic society? They have to:

- get accustomed to participating in important decision making, and learn how democratic decisions are taken in clubs, schools or community (voluntary) organisations;
- dare argue their own opinion;
- be able to choose;
- be able to analyse a situation and decide what they could be helpful with;
- grasp that all decisions have their consequences, and take personal responsibility;
- respect the attitudes of others and be able to show tolerance;
- understand that democracy requires time.

How can young people learn this? The best way to learn democracy is to practise it, to get used to it. So how does a youth meeting have to be organised to take democratic decisions? What models of functioning of the organisation would allow

young people to develop a democratic way of thinking and behaviour?

There are different models for practising democracy among young people. But they should all meet several requirements that could be called "success criteria for youth influence models". The list is not final, and every reader who has practical experience on the issue could add something.

A successful youth influence model is one that:

1) ensures that every young person gets the chance to speak, including those who are not doing well;
2) is taken seriously by young people as well as adults, and promotes responsibility for the decisions taken;
3) guarantees speedy and clear results as a response to suggestions, and keeps to the decisions made;
4) gives an honest response to suggestions by informing young people
   a) what it is possible to accomplish in the near future, or
   b) what can be carried out under certain conditions, or
   c) what it is impossible to put into practice, for instance if something is forbidden by the law.

# ACTIVE MEETING

An Active Meeting is held when it is necessary in a short period of time (an hour and a half to two hours) to evaluate the functioning of the organisation, suggest new ideas and choose which of them will be implemented in the near future. This model is especially good if as many people as possible are involved in the direct decision-making process. It goes very well if the participants are young people, because it is intensive, there is no idle talk and it brings obvious results. The number of participants can vary from 15 to 150.

If the number of members to be involved is higher in an organisation (club, high school etc.), separate meetings can be held for different groups. However, participation is voluntary, so not everybody will come. Those who do not come will lose their chance to have influence, and will soon feel it.

Such meetings (but in smaller groups) can even be held for children starting from the age of 11 or 12. And there are no upper age limits.

The meeting is called "active", because during it every participant can state his/her opinion. This is possible due to the organisation: the participants work in groups.

## Preparation

An Active Meeting needs preparation in advance. Place a number of tables in a large hall to accommodate the expected number of participants, to sit six to 12 at each table. Find the required number (and a few more) chairs. As an extra, place some refreshments on each table.

If the participants are teenagers, you might want to use some adult helpers during the meeting. They will have the role of secretaries. Ask them to sit one at each table when participants start coming into the meeting.

Participants themselves choose where to sit. Usually they sit next to the people they want to talk with or whom they know best. Participants have been informed about the topic of the meeting in advance. But it would be an advantage if they could see a poster with a written topic before coming.

One person leads the meeting, assigns tasks and allocates time for their accomplishment.

## Instructions

Before the beginning, groups have to elect a secretary. Otherwise, they can be appointed by the leader of the meeting. Secretaries are introduced to their role: they do not participate in the discussions, but have to write down everything that is said by participants. They can ask questions if an idea is not put clearly, but they have to be fair and write it the way it was said. Besides, they are also supposed to see that every participant can say what he/she wants. (It is especially important working with young people.)

At the beginning, the leader of the meeting briefly summarises why they are here. The future of the organisation will depend on the participants at the meeting. If they want changes, now is the time to put their thoughts and ideas on the table. Of course, efforts for their implementation will be needed as well. But a good start is very important. If the meeting has to evaluate the situation over the last period, recent events should be summarised briefly.

## Structure

The meeting consists of four parts. At the beginning, participants express their criticism of the given topic; later they talk about positive issues; finally they suggest ideas for improvement and choose the important ones to begin with. This model is an example of a structured talk, therefore participants should be warned if they start suggesting improvements or arguing before the time comes for it. Every part has its purpose, and all together they produce excellent results.

Part one – **Criticism**. We start with criticism because people first have to cast off their negative emotions.

Participants say everything they dislike about the subject. They do not argue or discuss. Secretaries write everything down that is said by the participants. This part lasts 15 minutes, and

at the end of it a representative from each group will read aloud what his/her group has criticised.

*Examples of criticism:*

*– lack of litter bins*

*– arrangements start too early*

*– it's too cold (hot) in the house*

*– arrangement X was boring.*

Part two – **What is/has been good**. While saying what they do/did like, the participants get used to recalling achievements, and praising people who work well.

In 15 minutes, the participants recall everything that has been done well. Again the secretaries write, while representatives read aloud the thoughts expressed by the groups.

*Examples of what is/has been good:*

*– it's good that discos are arranged every Friday*

*– it's nice to have a place to make tea*

*– I liked the excursion to ...*

*– our teacher is always willing to listen.*

Part three – **What could be improved** (20 to 25 minutes). This is a glance into the near future, a time to come up with ideas. What can we change? What are we going to do? What can we do with the means we have now? Secretaries write down all the ideas.

*Examples of ideas:*
*– arrangements on Friday evenings*
*– visiting neighbouring clubs*
*– buy more teacups*
*– advanced courses in computers.*

Before the ideas are read aloud, the leader of the meeting gives a small sheet of paper to each participant, and sees that they all have something to write with.

While representatives of the groups slowly read their papers out loud, every participant marks two to six ideas that he/she personally likes best (the number is specified by the leader). If there are more good ideas, participants cross some of them out, so that by the end they have chosen the specified number of ideas.

Part four – **We want this to be carried out** (ten to 15 minutes).

Participants read the chosen ideas at their group tables and discuss them. Every group has to end with five or six final suggestions to be implemented as the main priority.

When the final suggestions of the groups are read aloud, they can be discussed more deeply. Participants can explain how they want one or another idea carried out. So we start making a strategy, and the financial aspect of it is taken into consideration.

At the end of the meeting, groups elect representatives – one from each table. This group of participants (plus two or three adult secretaries if the meeting was organised with young people) stay longer, as they have to organise the final suggestions into topics. Usually a few groups will suggest solutions to one problem. By comparing or combining them, the group of representatives will find the best strategy.

## Implementation of decisions

The results of the meeting are handed over to the leaders' group/administration. In a week they look at them and develop a clear position (a few representatives from the meeting are invited). The leaders respond publicly by promising which suggestions

will be carried out, and state clearly how and when it will be done.

Leaders can reject a suggestion, if they give clear reasons as to what prevents its implementation. Clear argumentation leads either to acceptance of the case or finding ways to overcome obstacles. For example, a suggestion can be rejected on a financial basis. Participants can try to raise money themselves, or offer to work voluntarily to get the work carried out.

There can be a third response as well. Some suggestions can get the green light only on certain conditions, for example if the members will take responsibility for their implementation.

The best way for a public response is to display the answers to the suggestions made at the Active Meeting on a notice board. (All material from the Active Meeting can also be displayed in a public place for at least a week so that those not involved might be informed of the issues raised.)

In addition, further action is needed: creating working groups for the implementation of the suggestions, planning when and how they will be carried out.

## Strengths and weaknesses of the model

If an organisation did not until now use democratic decision models, the first Active Meeting can frighten its leaders, because in asking for criticism one cannot avoid it. It could start with a milder topic (such as: how we like the environment inside and outside the office/building), or agree that names of criticised persons will not be mentioned.

On the other hand, constant defensiveness and "burying one's head in the sand" is not of great use. We can learn from criticism. Maybe participants are not absolutely right in what they say, but their remarks are often worth thinking about. It is better to look ahead and try to correct things, than to take a defensive position. Leaders can learn a lot by asking and carefully listening. It makes them think again about certain problems, and contributes to their personal development.

Participants benefit a lot from taking part in the meeting. It is useful to their personal development. For example, it is useful for a representative of each group to read aloud the opinion of

the group at the end of each part. This is done not by a secretary and not by a person who wishes to do it all the time. Everybody has to try. By this we learn to speak on behalf of a group; we learn to represent others.

The meeting gives everybody the chance to share his/her opinions, even if he/she is a very shy young person. This is possible only if the groups are not too big (it is easier to express an opinion to a group of friends than in front of a big audience); besides, shy people are encouraged by a secretary. When a secretary writes down opinions, he/she never mentions who has said what. This reduces the fear of speaking for some people.

People (especially youth) need to be convinced that expressing opinions is useful. Therefore, clear positive changes (even if they are small) after each meeting reinforce a belief in democracy. The structure of the meeting helps people to understand that it is not enough to demand. You need to take into account the opinions of others, you need to suggest constructively, to convince others, and later to provide your own contribution when the suggestions are being implemented and to take responsibility for your own decisions.

If an Active Meeting is organised periodically it can serve as an excellent model for self-government in an organisation, or as a mechanism for youth influence in situations where decisions are traditionally taken by adults (schools, sports teams, etc.). It can be a good alternative to student councils. Its structure allows people in a period of an hour and a half, and together with many members of an organisation, to evaluate a situation, to raise ideas, to consider them and to decide which of them have to be implemented as a first priority. Then it remains only to form working groups and go into action.

While working with young people you can plan only one or two months in advance, and this can be done periodically through Active Meetings which start with an evaluation of the last period and end by planning interesting things for the near future. This model gives real influence to ordinary members of an organisation (or young people) and develops democratic relations in an organisation.

# FUTURE WORKSHOP

The structure of this model is very like the Active Meeting; however, the purpose is slightly different. It aims at developing a strategy in an organisation for solving a problem through the collaboration of all the parts. A Future Workshop helps to consider the problem more thoroughly, therefore it can be held as the follow-up of an Active Meeting where the problem was raised.

A Future Workshop takes eight to 12 hours, and as a rule is arranged for weekends.

The number of participants in a Future Workshop is limited (up to 28). However, in order to represent different opinions and attitudes, the members of the organisation have to be chosen at random, with two conditions: all ages and both sexes must be equally represented. Out of 28 participants, four are usually leaders (teachers, administration, etc.).

Special techniques help participants to relax and promote creative thinking. They are as important a part of the workshop as the main phases.

## Preparation

After choosing 24 members of the organisation and four leaders, you invite them to take part in a Future Workshop.

Find a place for the workshop, where participants will be able to work and live together for a couple of days (eat, sleep, and have fun in the evening). Preferably a cottage, or something like that. The best time is Friday afternoon and Saturday.

Before you start a Future Workshop, think carefully about the subject and questions to be raised. The leader of the workshop will supply participants with written instructions before the start of each round. What is written depends on the chosen topic (*see instructions 1 to 6*).

The person in charge arranges for coffee or tea and something to eat before the group arrives.

## Structure

The workshop consists of three main phases (Criticism and Experience, Fantasy and Utopia, and Strategy) and two preparatory parts. The first ("room without fear") has the aim of helping participants to get used to the situation and getting rid of fear and shyness, so that they can speak freely and communicate, regardless of the titles and status of the others. The second preparatory part is a stimulation of creativity. It starts later in the process.

**We start by creating a room without fear.**

After arrival, about half an hour is spent eating and relaxing. Then we place ourselves in a circle, without tables in front of us. We briefly tell each other our names, where we come from and our hobbies. Then the warm-up starts. It can be done in different ways, whatever suits best the ages and customs of the participants.

*With young people it can be done this way.*

The person in charge welcomes everyone, and states that from now on "everyone is equal". The teachers must also participate in this. The warm-up is accompanied by music.

1. You walk from here to there, slap each other on the thigh with the back of your hand, and maybe make a remark.
2. You still walk round, but change the game to try to avoid being slapped on the thigh. Quietly.
3. You walk round trying out different silly walks: on your heels, on your toes, with bandy legs, with knock-knees, with legs bent, and so on.
4. You choose to be a certain type, and walk round and salute the others, looking arrogant, demented, shy, pushy, prudish, and so on.
5. You lie down in circles with heads towards the middle, you reach out your hands and hold hands with as many people as possible.
6. Two people stand on a page of a newspaper; then four people. The newspaper is folded and the four repeat the attempt to stand on it. You fold and fold it until the page is so small that it is no longer possible to stand on it without the feet

going off the edge of the paper. It is permissible to stand on each other's shoulders, for example, so that one holds the other three.

7. The group is divided into five or six small groups; each of them is given a bag with different things in it. Using these things, make a "silent movie" which is presented to everybody accompanied by music from the Thirties.
8. Finally, lie down in a long row so that number two lies with his or her neck on the thighs of number one, and so on. Close your eyes and listen to romantic music for some minutes. After that sit up and tell the person next to you what you were thinking about while listening to the music.

*Warming up can also be talking and listening. The following kinds of warm-up can be used if the participants are grown-ups.*

1. Ask half the participants to place themselves in front of someone they have rarely spoken with. The two grasp each other's little fingers (like hooks) and by turn tell each other two things that they feel they are good at. The other one asks questions about it.
2. Keep holding with your little fingers, and say two things that you are very bad at. Talk about them.
3. Now sit down with another couple, and in turns say what you have heard. Now say what your partner is good at and bad at (it is important to listen).

4. All the participants sit down in a circle without tables between them and say what made the strongest impression on them (only one thing they have heard).
5. The leader of the workshop then tells the others how old he is, if he is married, how many children he has, his shoe size, his height. Then he asks the participants to write down a question they would like to ask him, but not about what he has just told them. The questions can be personal. When everybody has finished, he puts himself in the middle of the group, turns around, and asks everyone to look at him and then write down the answer they expect to get when they ask their question in a moment. When everyone has written down the answer they expect to get, the round starts.

It goes like this: a question is asked, the questioner reads his or her "answer" at once. Then the person in charge answers honestly. It is exciting to watch if the participants guess the answers correctly. However, this round also has another aim, namely to "cut down" the leader – the person in charge of the Future Workshop – because everybody must feel equal and no more important than the others, including the leader. The warming up is now over, and we can begin work on the topic.

The **topic** has been decided beforehand, at either an Active Meeting or by the members and leaders together. The next few hours are only concerned with this topic. The topic that follows (Your School Today) is an example.

A workshop is carried out in three phases that contain two rounds each. You start by reading the instructions to **round one of the Criticism and Experience phase** (*instruction 1*). Then you hand out copies of it together with some paper and pencils. Ask everyone to read it again, and ask them if they have understood the assignment.

When the team cannot think of more criticism, the first round is finished; but not the Criticism phase. Now we work deeper with the criticised points. The round two instruction is read aloud and handed out (*instruction 2*).

When the job is done, the results of the Criticism and Expe-

rience phase are written on big sheets of paper and hung on the wall. Remember to give each group their own colour of ink, which must be used all the time because of the report writing later. These sheets of paper are examined by one member of each group, and questions can be asked. This way we inspire each other.

The **Fantasy and Utopia phase** starts, and you hand out the instructions for round one (*instruction 3*). What we are doing here is to turn our thoughts from negative statements to positive dreams. It is a way of finding your inner wishes. For example:
the group criticised "Students are afraid of some teachers";
their dream is "Students feel that all teachers are their friends".
When it is finished, this must also be written on big sheets of paper, and examined by everybody.

After this very important round there is a break. Before the second round of the Fantasy phase we try **to work on creativity**, and it can be done in many ways.

1. Play modern classical music for the group while everyone is lying comfortably on the floor with their eyes closed. Later they say what they experienced.
2. Start an "automatic story". For example, start by saying: "It was a dark and stormy night ..." and everybody takes turns in continuing the story.
3. Combine three to four random chosen words, for instance: "The penguin's sister's free and easy fairy dance" and give each group ten minutes to make up a story about them. These stories are read aloud to the group.

There are a lot of other techniques. We are entering the world of Utopia, where everything is possible.

Now read the instructions for **the second round of the Utopia phase** (*instruction 4*) thoroughly, together with the group, and encourage everyone to go to the limits of their imagination.

The Utopia dreams are written on big sheets of paper, and you go through them: it is quite often very funny.

And now the paper with the instructions for the Strategy pha-

se round one is handed out (*instruction 5*). Go through it. Make sure to say that it is important that everybody reads both the dreams and utopias before five or six important ideas are chosen to work on. Do the last work on the Strategy phase round two (*instruction 6*).

Going through these strategies does not complete the work. The chosen projects have to be carried out in the future. The pupils have to be encouraged to do the things they can do, and at a meeting as soon as possible the teachers must agree on carrying out as much as possible of what has been decided. It is extremely important that the results of the group work can be seen quickly.

People, especially youth, quickly lose faith in democratic processes if they do not see results.

Therefore: act quickly! Give the participants precise answers: what is going to be carried out and when? And if it is necessary to reject some proposals, remember to state reasons for a refusal very clearly.

All the material for the future workshop is typed or printed the same day or the next day. Copies of this **workshop report** are handed out to the participants. They have done an enormous job: they have used their time and their brains for the organisation's development. Maybe not all the ideas have been used this time, but the members can work on them later. The workshop report is also the first visible result of the work they have carried out.

*Instruction 1.* ***Criticism and Experience phase, round one***

*What serious problems do you find in your school today?*
- *why doesn't democracy work?*
- *why do you have problems?*

***Way of working:***
- *use ten minutes to think it all over*
- *write a word or a sentence every time you get an idea*
- *do it all in silence*

- *when I tell you, go to your groups and tell the others what you have been thinking about and what you have written*
- *try to find other ideas together*

***Remember:***
*Let your irritation and indignation run free. You will soon feel that you are not alone. It does not matter whether your points are important or not, because we will come back to grade them and to make priorities later.*

*Instruction 2.* ***Criticism and Experience phase, round two***

*What serious problems do you find in your school today?*
- *why doesn't democracy work?*
- *why do you have problems?*

*Now start to discuss more thoroughly and to deepen what you have found together in the groups.*

***Way of working:***
- *stay in your group*
- *find which critical ideas are the same kind, put them in a block on a piece of paper, and give the block a name, e.g. teachers, classrooms, leaders, education ...*
- *put the ideas in blocks in order: most important, second-most important, and so on*
- *why this system? Find reasons why*

***Remember:***
*We are still looking back. Later we will build the criticism into the real strategy. But not now! We have not started to solve anything yet!*

*Instruction 3.* ***Fantasy and Utopia phase, round one***

***Purpose:***
- *to turn around all your negative phrases and make them positive statements*
- *to get some good ideas and solutions which are connected with our own experiences*

***Way of working:***

- *take your piece of paper with all the numbered critical points, and convert them to positive expressions*
- *find other positive goals if you were inspired by the sentences you have just made*

***Example:***

*If one of your critical points says, "Teachers do not behave in a democratic way," you could convert this into, "Teachers do everything they can to be good democrats, and they intend to teach their students to be good democrats too".*

*Instruction 4.* ***Fantasy and Utopia phase, round two***

***Theme:***

*What would you wish your school to be like in 15 years?*

- *What solutions are you dreaming about?*
- *What would a democratic school be like?*

***Way of working:***

- *forget everything about reality*
- *let your creativity run free*
- *use your wildest imagination*
- *think that anything is possible*
- *you are not allowed to use "killer remarks" (don't criticise ideas and suggestions!)*
- *forget that one thing is more important than other things*

***Comments:***

*Do not be afraid to dream! You will come back to reality again. Even though we are grown-ups, we have still not forgotten how to play and dream. We still have an idea of how to be happy!*

*Instruction 5.* ***Strategy phase, round one***

*Now we have worked out two types of goals, or wishes, or utopias. One of them by making bad experiences into good experiences; the other one by using our imagination.*

*Now try to co-ordinate or select the ideas you find most interesting.*

***Way of working:***

- *read or try to remember the ideas suggested by all the groups*
- *find for yourself five or six interesting suggestions*
- *tell the others in your group what you have chosen*
- *and then together find (maybe by co-ordination) the most interesting of them*

***Commentary:***

*Don't think about whether it is possible to work it out. It is more important to choose the best ideas. Later we shall see what we are able to do!*

*Instruction 6.* ***Strategy phase, round two***

*We are now approaching the end of this Future Workshop. We have found some good goals for the future, goals which we find interesting and important. Now we shall learn to act. It is not enough only to shout. We must also do something!*

***Way of working:***

- *read all the suggestions, including from the other groups*
- *choose one or more projects that you will go home and bring to life, or do something about (alone or with others)*
- *ask yourself: "What should prevent me in ...?"*
- *take the first steps here and now*
- *find someone to co-operate with (pupils, teachers, other people)*

# CAFÉ DISCUSSION

A Café Discussion is a model used in seminars or conferences. It gives participants an opportunity to share ideas, discuss opinions, go deeper into actual issues, and broaden and consolidate their knowledge and understanding. This model works well if a strategy has to be found, a vision has to be created, or ideas have to be raised.

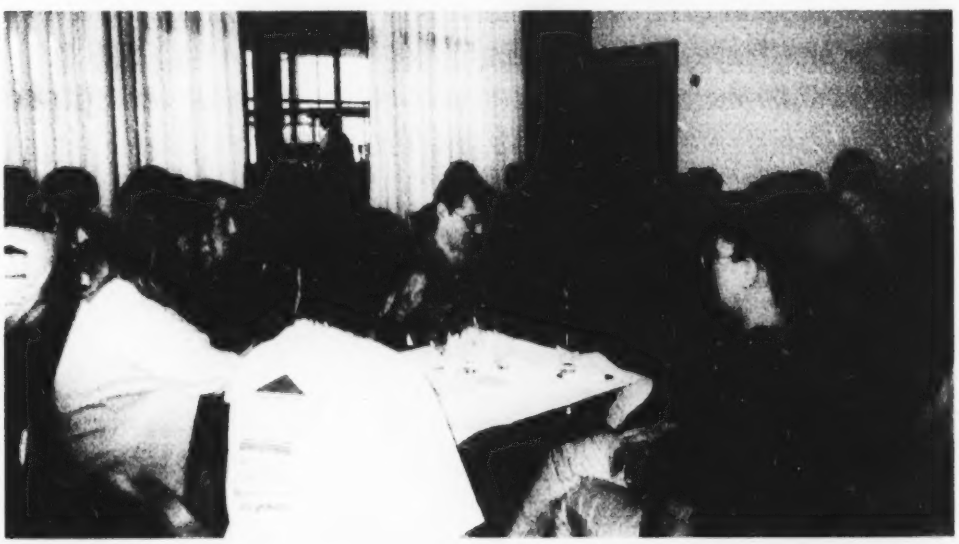
A Café Discussion does not work well if the aim is planning, making decisions, defining priorities or resolving a conflict.

There can be 20 to 40 participants.

## Preparation

A room is arranged like a café: with tables and chairs round them so that there is enough room for everybody, with five to seven people sitting at each table. A big sheet of paper is placed on the tablecloth, or used as one. The paper is fastened to the bottom of the tables from several sides. You put something to write with on it (e.g., felt-tip pens) and some coffee and tea, or soft drinks and snacks if possible. Candles (if available) will intensify the café atmosphere and make it more fun.

The "host" of the café has to consider the topic of the discussion in advance, and prepare separate questions or assignments for the tables. Questions discussed are supposed to provide



inspiration: they should be personally interesting for participants, clear and open. The questions are written down, and handed over to groups when everybody sits down at the tables.

For example, the topic of a discussion in an international conference was: "Translating and adapting civic education material". The groups were given the following questions/ tasks:

- To what degree countries or ethnic groups want to change the material?
- Historical and cultural reasons for changing the material;
- Pedagogical reasons for changing the material;
- What would be the best strategies for defining goals and means when adapting the material? (Whose decision?)

The host of the café has to plan the structure of the discussion, decide how much time will be used for each round, and choose the "weaving" techniques (*see below*).

The host of the Café Discussion also welcomes participants, and provides instructions for each assignment or round. The leader of the discussion is supposed to feel when the group's energy is changing, and stop the discussion before it runs dry.

## Structure

Intensive discussions on the questions presented take place at the tables in several rounds of 20 to 40 minutes each. Between the rounds, "weaving" is organised. Weaving is a set of techniques that help groups to exchange information, ideas and opinions. Weaving is a process of linking up separate parts into the whole. This is done here: the participants sitting at the different tables must see their own thoughts in the context of the main topic.

From the start, ask participants to sit down together with people who they don't communicate with every day (or do not even know).

The first weaving round is visiting other tables. The host chooses a few techniques from the following list, bearing in mind the nature of the topic and the time available for discussions.

Weaving techniques

- *Visiting tables* (all groups at the same time). This is organised as follows. One member of each group stays at his/her own table; the others go to different tables, where they listen to what "table hosts" are ready to tell them. The leader of the Café Discussion says what table hosts have to talk about, and in what way. Afterwards, participants go back to their tables, where they tell their group members briefly what they have heard.
- *Postcards.* While discussing the given question, each group writes it down and sends a postcard to the nearest table. Participants at the other table write down their comments, and send the postcard further. The postcard comes back to the home table after collecting comments from all the tables. The task can be varied by asking alternative questions, or questions which go deeper into the matter.
- *Posting up.* The paper tablecloth that is used to fulfil an assignment (brainstorming, problem setting, writing down doubts or suggestions) is put up on the wall near the table. Then all participants individually study all posters, either in their own time during a break or while listening to the host's comments.
- *ABCD groups.* New groups are created by naming participants A, B, C and D in every working group. They go up to the posters and try to find out what is written on them. Afterwards, participants go back to their former groups.
- *Looking for inspiration.* All tables work on their assignment, but one sends representatives to visit other tables. They listen to what is said there, and bring back new ideas for their own group. Every table does it at a different moment, when told by the leader of the Café Discussion.
- *Another technique is to change the group structure* in the middle of the work for the rest of the discussion time.

With the exception of the last technique, in all other weaving cases participants go back to their former groups and go on with the discussion on the topic assigned to the group. However, inspiration from other groups may allow them to look at their own topic from another angle.

A Café Discussion usually ends with some kind of presentation of results. For example, in the last round of discussions, groups may be given the task of writing down their final suggestions/ideas on the given topic/question on a new sheet of paper. This is important if the result is to be further used, either by presenting it to other groups or in order to come back to the ideas after some time. It is not necessary if the aim of the Café Discussion was to understand each other better or to share information.

A Café Discussion is a model of group communication. Therefore, it is vital that participants are interested in the topic and ready to contribute. The important thing here is not just to share your own ideas or opinions, it is also to listen to and hear good ideas from other participants. Listening is harder than many people think. We are used to listening not in order to understand, but in order to wait till an appropriate word comes up that will allow us to interrupt the speaker and start speaking ourselves: "... I have experienced the same thing," "... I know what you should do," "... I don't agree".

A Café Discussion helps us to learn to listen.

*Source: Flemming Mejer and Anne Gitte Munk, UC-Odense*

# FISH BALL

This technique is often used as a continuation of other discussion models. It allows us to go deeper into the problems, or consider thoroughly the ideas raised during an Active Meeting or other kind of discussion.

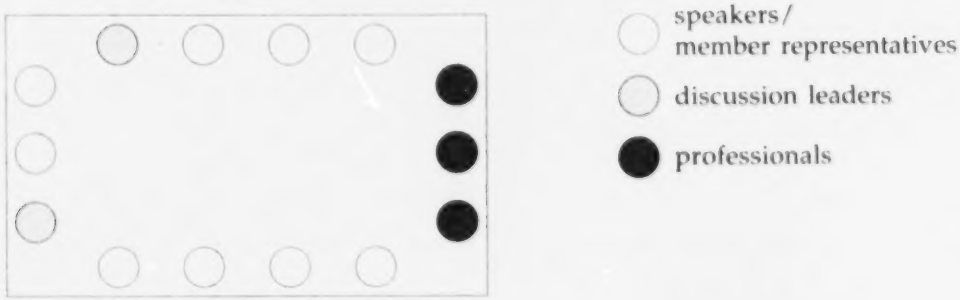
Participants in a Fish Ball are, as a rule, between four and ten representatives of the ordinary members of an organisation (youth, students, staff). If a Fish Ball is organised as an extension of an Active Meeting, each table will elect its speaker.

Two people lead the discussion, and a few professionals are invited to participate, in order to get some reliable information, if a discussion reaches a deadlock (e.g., if it is necessary to find out what the law says on an issue, or the usual actions of the authorities in a particular case). You can invite professionals who you think are appropriate for the issues raised. It might be a policeman, a social worker, a teacher, an officer from a local School Board, a politician, and so on.

A Fish Ball is observed by all interested members of the organisation.

## Preparation

In the middle of a large room build a "fish ball" with the help of chairs (*fig. 1*). Speakers and leaders of the discussion sit on three sides of it, the fourth side is for a handful of different professionals. All other participants are just spectators, and they sit close to each other around the Fish Ball.



Leaders agree in advance the items which will be discussed in a Fish Ball. They can refer to what was said by participants during the previous discussion. For example: "During the Active Meeting you suggested that ... Could you say more about how you imagine this idea could be carried out?"

## Structure

One of the leaders presents the opening question on the first item. One or more speakers in the Fish Ball answer it. Before doing so, they make a sign to the discussion leader. Both leaders help the participants in the Fish Ball to develop the discussion and reveal different aspects of the idea. When the leaders feel that speakers need more information, they give a word to the professionals.

As a rule, spectators do not participate in this discussion. However, if they really feel that they can contribute, they make a sign to the leaders that they might also say a word.

When the discussion on the first item comes to a conclusion, the leaders present the opening question on the next item. The discussion on each item aims at the clarification of an idea, finding out possibilities for its implementation, and the possible dangers or limitations. Sometimes the discussion ends with a shared conclusion; in other cases the group states what has to be clarified later. As a result, participants and spectators understand better the essence of the ideas discussed, and each other.

A Fish Ball discussion should not last longer than one hour. Besides, the leaders have to ensure that the atmosphere of the discussion is friendly and constructive, and that the professionals are not putting down the opinions of the speakers, and that all the speakers in the Fish Ball have an equal opportunity to say what they mean.

Ideas, opinions and information put into words during a Fish Ball discussion can become very important afterwards when we come to the implementation phase. Therefore, it is necessary to have a secretary who will write everything down. In order to implement the suggestions, they have to be clear in how they are visualised, and how they are to be implemented. This is where the records of the Fish Ball can be used.

# LEMNISCAT

When the topic is very new and it is hard for people to make suggestions, they can be helped by a game, during which the most important values of the group come up. Afterwards, by using other discussion models, the values can be turned into strategies. This model, called Lemniscat, was used successfully in Lithuania, where groups of young people chose to consider the issue of growing drug abuse, and its prevention.

Besides, this model works well when the aim is to help different generations or different social groups to understand each other better. When people nurture different values and have different attitudēs to life, it is difficult for them to understand each other and find solutions together. For example, in Danish schools Lemniscat was used to help parents understand the values of their children's generation (students in the sixth and seventh forms). It should help the two generations talk together on burning issues: why bad habits (alcohol, drugs, smoking) are spreading among ever younger and younger teenagers. Grown-ups afterwards praised the model, and considered it better than any good lecture based on research and statistics.

Lemniscat lasts for about three hours. If the aim is to compare the attitudes of different groups, the groups should work separately. The number of participants in one group can vary from 15 to 100.

## Preparation

The room has to be big enough to allow all the participants to sit in groups of four to ten people at a table.

Organisers prepare hand-outs in advance. The instructions on the hand-outs will depend slightly on the chosen topic (*see examples*). There should be as many copies of all hand-outs as the number of participants expected. Each participant should also have something to write with.

## Structure

The topic is announced, e.g. "NO to alcohol and drug dependence among young people". It is also written in big letters in a prominent place in the room.

Phase one – **individual reflection**. Participants get a form with two questions each (*see below*). Instruction (depends on topic): "You see two questions, but we will take them in turn. Work quietly on your own. First, think of and write down an answer to question number one: What can prevent young people from using alcohol and drugs? Write down only one, but the most important, thing in your opinion." They should work alone quietly for five minutes.

When work on the first question is finished, go on with the instruction: "Now think what induces young people to use alcohol and drugs. Indicate three of the greatest dangers, while answering question number two. It can be external dangers, such as certain people and their actions, or it can be internal dangers, something that is inside us." Again five to ten minutes.

1. *What is needed to prevent young people from using alcohol and drugs?*

   _____

2. *Indicate the three greatest dangers that induce young people to use alcohol and drugs.*

   _____

   _____

   _____

Phase two – **group discussion**. Participants work in groups. They begin by reading and discussing their answers to question number one. The group has to work out by mutual agreement what the two most important things are for the solution of the problem.

Later, the leader asks participants to discuss their answers to question number two. Again each group has to decide on the five greatest dangers. The conclusions are written down on big sheets of paper and put up on a wall.

Phase three – **consideration of the negative aspects**. Groups present the dangers that they found to be the most important. During the presentation, participants are often asked what the reasons are for the negative phenomena. Group conclusions are compared. New facts and tendencies come up. Later you can write down all the dangers mentioned on one sheet of paper, starting with those most often mentioned.

Phase four – **group values**. Groups read aloud what has to be done to prevent young people using alcohol and drugs. (If the time is short this phase can be skipped.) The leader writes down the statements briefly (in one or two words) in a List of Values (Appendix A) next to the values already written there. The organisers make copies of sheet A, and give them to each participant after a break.

Phase five – **individual reflection on the values**. Each participant gets a copy of the filled-in sheet A after the break. Instruction: "You see different values that people care about. Some of them you have just suggested. Look at all these values and think which of them are more important to prevent youth from using alcohol and drugs. Read all of them silently, and when you know which of them is the most important write a one beside it. Continue, giving a two to the next most important, and so

on. End by giving numbers to all of them. Work individually. Every opinion is important."

At the end of this task, participants are given sheet B, to write down all the values in order of priority. They use sheet A, already with numbers, to do this. Participants can only write five values in each square of sheet B. This way, participants prepare to argue their own opinions.

Phase six – **group discussion on values**. Each group is given sheet C. Participants have to share and discuss the chosen values, and together identify the five which are the most important. When they come to an agreement, they write the values on sheet C in order of priority. It is important that participants do not list the opinions mechanically, but really discuss and try to argue them.

Afterwards, groups think of a sentence to support each of the five chosen values from sheet C. Sentences must explain how the group understands the values, and their importance for the solution of the problem, for example:

"SELF-CONFIDENCE, because it helps a person to stand up to bad influences" or

"POLICE ACTIVITY, for example visiting discos, taking care of order in young people's meeting places, etc."

The values chosen by the groups are put up on a wall. You can make a list of all the chosen values, starting with the ones most often mentioned.

At the end of this phase, group representatives read aloud and comment on the values and the sentences.

## Further use of the results

It is important that the results of this work are not thrown away. When discussing and presenting the greatest dangers, and the values promoting the solution to the problem, participants have given a lot of information which is important to them (for finding solutions) and to other people as well. Depending on the aim, the work can be continued in different ways:

1. going deeper into the values. How they should be encouraged, in order to solve the problem (you can use models such as a Fish Ball, Café Discussion or Future Workshop);

2. presenting the results to other groups, such as parents, teachers, representatives of authorities or government organisations. (You could carry out Lemniscat on the same topic with adults, and compare the results of both groups while youth representatives are allowed to comment on them, for example in the form of a Fish Ball.)

**A**
**List of values**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Self-confidence | Imagination | Independence |
| Personal contacts | Humour | Freedom |
| Love | Curiosity | Frankness |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

**B**
**Scale of values**

| Especially important: |
| --- |
| |

| Very important: |
| --- |
| |

| Important: |
| --- |
| |

C

**Group work: giving priorities to values**

Especially important values:

1. _____

_____

_____

2. _____

_____

_____

3. _____

_____

_____

4. _____

_____

_____

5. _____

_____

_____ _____

**Group no.** _____

# COMBINED SYSTEM

This model works well if a group of young people has to be involved in finding concrete solutions to problems that they have not considered thoroughly in advance, and feel incompetent, or on the whole have difficulties, in expressing their opinions on an issue.

Let us imagine that a group has to find ideas or good solutions on such abstract issues as:

- free time;
- studies (or job);
- personal development;
- family;
- international opportunities for youth.

## Structure

Organisers (adults) put up five big sheets of paper, one for each topic. A member of the adult group presents each of the five topics more extensively, but without suggesting solutions.

**Individual suggestions.** Each participant gets a batch of small sheets of paper. They are asked to write something on each of the five topics. Participants can express criticism, doubt, fear or demands, but they should start every thought with the words "I would

like ...". When this is finished, they attach their notes to the big posters according to the topic. This work should take about 20 minutes.

**Consideration in groups.** Now the people are divided into groups, and each group gets several notes from each of the five posters. This is done in order to encourage all the groups to talk about all five topics.

Participants have to discuss the content of the notes, and decide which of them they find most important. The groups should work constructively, by reading one note at a time and discussing how they have understood it and what is needed to carry it out. So their task is not to classify notes quickly, but to really go deep into their content.

Each group is assigned an adult leader for the discussion. The adults should ensure that nobody dominates in a group, that everybody can talk, and they should do their best to see that the discussion keeps to the given topic and that the group does not start talking about other things.

**Looking for solutions.** After a break, each group is asked to choose the two or three most important statements for each topic, and on that basis suggest a few good solutions. Solutions have to be well discussed and based on clear arguments.

During the presentation of results, it will become clear that the group has found several efficient solutions on each topic that can be discussed in detail the next time, or implemented straight away.

# NEGOTIATIONS

A person can often get into a situation where they are negotiating on behalf of others, and where a few sides are in disagreement but have to meet and agree on a solution. This situation is psychologically difficult for the negotiator, and he/she has to use a lot of energy to deal with it. People who have experience in negotiating, or who have teaching ability, often obtain better results.

Therefore, it is useful to gain this kind of experience in an artificially created negotiating situation, as described below. This technique provides an opportunity to achieve psychological readiness and skills, and helps people to understand how difficult it is to be a politician or to defend the wishes or decisions of other people.

## Simulation of negotiations

Let us imagine that a school or club has decided to allocate and fit out one room as a relaxation room for older youth. The adults in the organisation asked some young people to find out what this place should look like (colours, furniture, equipment, etc.). The youth group was also told what sum of money they should not exceed.

Opinions in the group turned out to be very different, because some of them wanted very technical surroundings and others wished to have a very cosy room with comfortable furniture, flowers and pictures.

The group asked one of the adult leaders to help them to arrange a discussion, and he suggested starting from a simulation of negotiations described in the following way.

Participants are divided into groups of six or seven according to their attitudes towards the problem. Each group gets six cardboard strips, ten by 50 centimetres in size, and one thick pen. The colour of the cardboard strips differs from group to group.

Now groups take 30 to 40 minutes to discuss and name six important things about the youth relaxation room. They write

them on the six cardboard strips, and hang them on a big sheet of paper that is put up near their table. The strips are hung in order of priority.

Groups elect their representatives (or negotiators).

Negotiators sit down at one table, and the groups sit down behind their representatives, near enough to hear every word in the negotiations.

Each member of the support groups gets a bunch of small sheets of paper and something to write with.

The support groups (but not the negotiators) are instructed to try to see that at least two of their wishes come up on the board as a final suggestion. They are not allowed to interfere in the discussions between negotiators, but may write notes to their representative. The notes may contain suggestions, praise, criticism or discontent in connection with the negotiator's actions.

Representatives start the negotiations. Their aim is to agree on between five and eight final suggestions for equipping the relaxation room. Every time they agree on a suggestion they have to take a strip from one group's poster – the one nearest in meaning to what was agreed - and stick it on a separate

poster or blackboard. Final suggestions must hang in order of priority.

The leader of the simulation has to pay a great deal of attention to how the process unfolds, as the situation may become very difficult for the group representatives. It can happen that one of the negotiators loses their self-control or refuses to continue and leaves their place at the negotiating table. This happens because the pressure from the outer groups constantly grows as they see their representative accept one compromise after another.

The simulation of negotiations should not last longer than 30 minutes. It is brought to an end, regardless of whether groups have come to a conclusion.

Right after that, the leader of the simulation initiates the final discussion, in which he allows negotiators and members of the pressure groups to say how they felt during the process, what was most difficult and what they learnt from the simulation.

What can we learn from this exercise? We can learn that:

- agreements with like-minded people are not very difficult;
- it is difficult to give in to the opinions of other people;
- it is especially difficult to defend the decisions of a group;
- the art of negotiating is difficult in itself;
- in a democracy we have to learn to listen to other people's arguments and take into account their opinions;
- we should beware of the need to constantly come out on top;
- we should beware of our egoism.

# GOOD IDEAS ARE VALUABLE

Even in democratic organisations, people sometimes need fresh ideas to improve their operations. In the following section some techniques that stimulate creativity and help to find ideas for further use are described.

When you arrange a meeting of members of an organisation to solve a problem, do not forget to appoint one person to write down everything that is said. Often good ideas are brought up, but people later forget them and do not put them into practice.

Some of the discussion models described in this book (Active Meeting, Future Workshop, Café Discussion, Lemniscat) provide records of the process, which are important to keep for the future. In other cases, organisers should take care that the ideas are not forgotten.

However, there is another way of killing new ideas: by coming up with stock responses which slip off the tongue without people themselves being aware of it, but which harm both the activities and personal relations. Examples are given in the "Statements that kill good ideas" section. Be careful. Keep others from doing it, and avoid the habit yourself. Do not react this way to other people's ideas.

## Brainstorming

A group of five to 15 people meets to find creative and productive solutions to a problem.

The problem:

- has to be clearly and precisely described;
- has to be understandable to the people at the meeting so that there is no need to give a long introductory explanation with a lot of facts;
- it should not have too few alternative solutions.

Participants are asked to put into words any ideas that come to mind when thinking of a solution to a problem, and to do it quickly and freely. Somebody has to write everything down. In addition, somebody has to see that participants keep to the four main rules. The leader of the session can do this.

Brainstorming needs a group leader who:

- knows how to organise brainstorming and other techniques for generating ideas;
- calls the group together no later than one day before the session, and presents the problem which has to be solved;
- writes down some ideas in advance in order to present them if the session flags;
- ensures that participants keep to the four main rules, and interrupts if they are violated;
- as soon as possible after the session produces a report on the ideas. The idea creation process is finished only after the participants have seen the report.

The ideas raised are discussed further. This is done by the group, or by an outside judge. Brainstorming can last for between 20 and 60 minutes, and always finishes with a conversation with participants on how the group worked.

**Rules**

- no criticism
- say any idea that comes to mind
- find as many ideas as possible (later you will choose)
- you may suggest how to combine or improve ideas

We have to learn to think *together with others*, and not about others. Besides, the four main rules can be applied to all other idea-creation techniques. A detailed explanation of the rules is given below.

*Criticism is forbidden* until the moment when the shape of the idea becomes clear. Only then can free consideration, criticism and evaluation of the idea start.

*Spontaneity.* The more unrestrained the ideas are, the better. A crazy idea can cause an unexpected loosening up in a person who otherwise keeps to conventional thinking.

*Quantity is desirable.* The aim is to suggest as many alternative ways of solving a problem as possible. This rule is based on the "quantity bears quality" principle. So the more ideas that are matured, the higher is the probability that there are some good ideas among them.

*Ideas are combined and improved.* All participants are encouraged to say if, while thinking on the ideas suggested, they have found out how to improve or combine them.

The result of this technique is a long list of new ideas or suggestions on how to solve a problem. Later we can choose which of the ideas will be implemented. However, sometimes this is not enough if the solution has to be unusual. In this case the group should be helped to step over the bounds of traditional thinking. Although this seems paradoxical, it can be done when the ideas come in another order, that is, without naming the problem at the beginning. The next technique described is based on this principle.

## Target

When a group meets, each participant gets a picture of a target (*fig. 2*). Everybody should now concentrate on it. They do nothing but look at it, and write down whatever associations come up: words and sentences. After 20 minutes, each participant will have a long list of associations, for example: round, wheels, centre, man in the centre, shooting-range, egoism, the eye of a tornado, competition, spot, mathematics, system, the inner circle, and so on.

Then the leader asks everyone to delete the first five items from their lists (the first associations of participants are often very alike), and sit down in groups of three. Only now the leader presents the problem that has to be solved. The problem is described by the leader, but it should be solved together.

**Problem:** Let us suppose that a kind of election will be held in the near future, but an organisation can feel that its members are not interested in it. The leader encourages the staff (adults) to think how they can motivate the young people to take an interest in politics and elections.

Participants sit in threes, each with his/her own list in which the first five associations have been crossed off. Each group now has to think of at least 12 solutions based on specific associations, to find out how to motivate students to take an interest

in society and political problems, and involve them in discussions on the issues.

Each group starts with one person reading the next association after those wiped off. They try to find a solution. When finished, the next person reads his/her first association after those wiped off, and they go on that way until they have used at least three associations each. Associations are read in turn, without skipping any of them!

The techniques or means suggested in the process are recorded. Sometimes an association itself provides an idea for a solution. If not, participants can make further associations on the word. However, they should take care not to fall into the way of traditional thinking.

We can take a look at how such associations turn into solutions.

Person A reads their first association – THE INNER CIRCLE.

The group reflects on it, and comes to a solution: a temporary situation should be created in the organisation where the youth of the "inner circle" (i.e. in power) will get so many privileges that the rest of the members will react. Personal experience will be used in the follow-up discussion about political games, representing voters, and so on.

Person B wrote: BLACK-WHITE.

The group comes to the following conclusion: to prepare material by cutting out pictures of well-known people from newspapers and magazines. The heads of the "good performers" will be glued on the bodies of "bad performers", and the other way round (this can be done by computer as well). Participants will have to imagine these people in another's role, and discuss, if this is possible, if they would behave the same way under particular circumstances.

Person C wrote: CURVES.

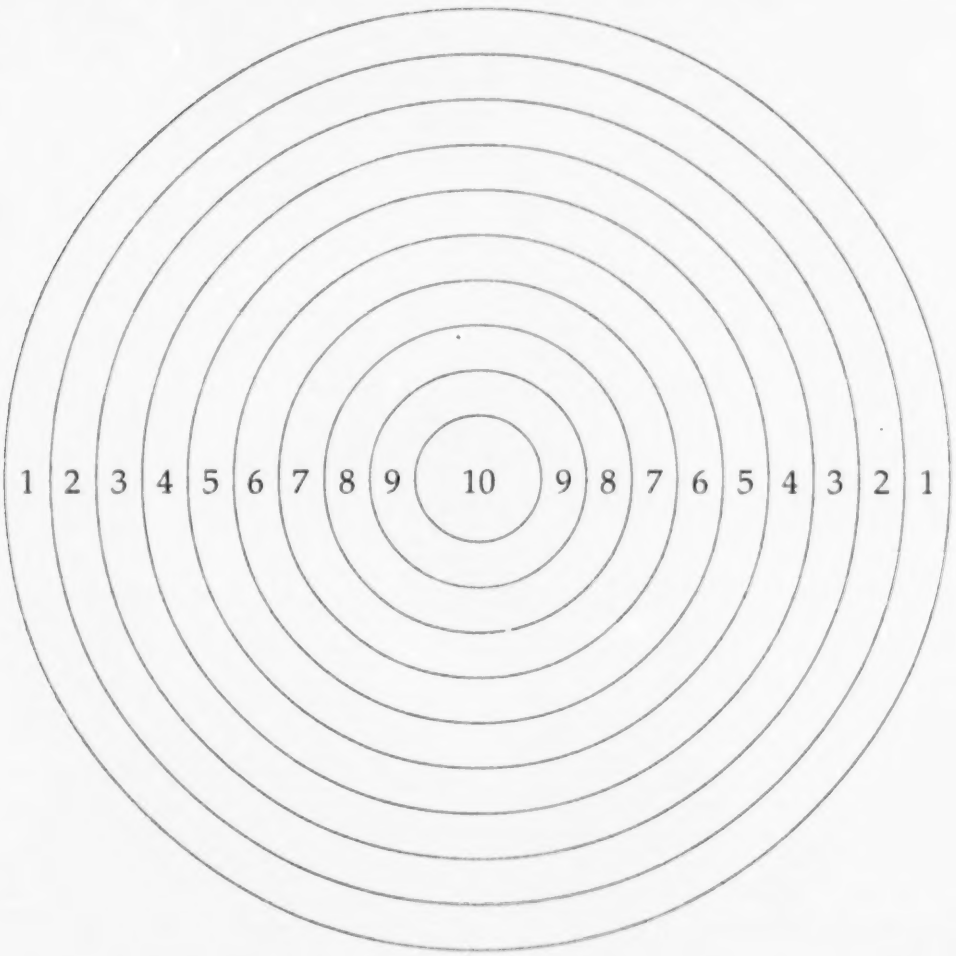
The group has some new associations: straight lines – straight – right – rights. The chain of associations stops there, and a suggestion comes up: a set of cards could be produced where

every card will have a statement about human rights. The set of cards will be used by four participants on a special evening. Each player will choose ten cards with the statements that he/she considers to be the most important. When a player puts a card on the table, the next player puts a card beside it which has an opposing statement. Both players argue for the statements on their cards. An observer evaluates the arguments, and decides which card wins.

Somebody wrote: THE EYE OF A TORNADO.

It led to the following solution: the person who made the association goes home and writes a fairy-tale about a small state. It was ruined, because all the inhabitants were selfish and forgot everybody and about everything around them. The sta-

*Fig. 2*



te broke down because of the total unwillingness to undertake anything, meanness and laziness. The idea came up when the group was thinking how the association could be related to the problem. And "the eye of a tornado" is the main problem, as all members only think of themselves.

The fairy-tale could be a good start for an arrangement where afterwards young people are asked to remember similar facts from the media and other sources.

By the end, the responsible members of the organisation have many ideas for solving problems. Some of them may still have to be improved. But these ideas are new, unique and developed by the group itself.

## Statements that kill good ideas

Stock replies can kill good ideas, damage friendship, collaboration and progress. Read and add to the following list:

1. We tried it before.
2. It's too expensive.
3. We can't get it here.
4. We don't have time for that.
5. There are too few of us.
6. Why change? Everything is going well.
7. It's impossible to put into practice.
8. You're two years ahead of your time!
9. We've never done it before.
10. We're not mature enough for that.
11. The headmaster will never agree to it.
12. They'll just laugh at us.
13. Let's wait a bit.
14. Let's establish a committee.
15. This change is too radical.
16. Come back down to Earth!
17. We'll never convince the others.
18. The others will not understand it.
19. You can't teach me anything!
20. Let's do as others do.

*Source: Jack W. Taylor "Hur man skapar nya ideer", Leo Astrup, Sønderborg*

# CONCLUSION

It is an increasing tendency today that youth are not interested in participating in elected committees, boards or student councils; however, they are keen on being involved if they can get some influence in less formalised ways, without special prior organisation and especially without too many pieces of paper. This is one of the reasons why the Active Meeting is becoming popular among young people in many countries.

Youth doesn't like to sit for hours among elected members and play at being adults. They will prefer different opinions and give room to different solutions and decisions.

Birgitte Simonsen, a researcher on youth issues, has studied for several years the changing understanding of democracy among youth. The results of her investigation show that young people understand democracy differently to how their parents do.

Youth does not accept majority rule as democratic, and does not necessarily think that people have to seek unanimity.

Young people do not want to be represented, and do not want to represent others.

They consider it democratic to give all people the chance to do what they want.

So leaders and teachers should think what space they give to the voice of youth. What may young people decide in the framework of an organisation? Is it difficult for them? Are the majority making decisions? Are the decisions being followed with responsibility? Do young people represent their coevals? How are minority rights taken into account? Does youth have real influence, or are the main decisions still made by adults or the youths that shout louder than the others?

Experience and interviews with different people have shown that a practical implementation of democratic principles in an organisation and the growth of the influence of youth depend on adults: their role is exceptional.

You should not wait until young people start showing the initiative themselves. The obligation of adults is to establish clear and effective democracy models to allow youth to get

involved in active participation, and at the same time ask for responsibility.

It is therefore important that youth leaders and teachers know how important their role is in training young people to live in a democracy.

It may be decided at a national level that youth everywhere, where they study, work or spend their free time, have to take part when important decisions concerning their lives are made. In that case, it is important that all people dealing with youth work towards the same goal.

All organisations should define the influence of youth as a goal, and work consciously to pursue it. This goal should imbue all activities. Young people are not just allowed to demand and get what they want. Young people are asked to take responsibility and to participate in the implementation of their own decisions.

For this purpose, adults should establish clear frameworks for their influence, and the parameters have to be broad enough to motivate youth to collaborate. And adults should be reliable in this "game".

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# Democracy Every Day

*Discussion and Decision Models for Young People and Adults*

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*Democracy Every Day* is the fourth book by Eigil Kjærgaard and Rima Martinenienė, and is published in English and Lithuanian. Their previous publications *Five Cheers for Democracy*, *The Dialogue Bridge* and *Springtime Rediscovered* have aroused interest in Lithuania and been translated into Czech, Estonian and Latvian.

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